



The Pineapple Story



In the beginning

The Guarani Indians in South America (home of the pineapple) called it “nana – the excellent fruit.” It wasn’t until 1493 that Christopher Columbus “discovered” pineapples on the island of Guadeloupe and named them “Pina de Indes” – or pine of the Indians, which eventually became the name we know today.

In 1548 Portuguese traders brought the delicious fruit and its seeds to India and also exported them to Africa. By the end of the 16th century pineapples were being grown throughout the tropics but it wasn’t until 1650 that the wonderful fruit reached Europe.

The pineapple plant: The botanical name for the pineapple plant is “Ananas comosus” (excellent fruit). It takes about 13 months to grow pineapples – the crown is planted in the soil and the plant begins to bloom after about 9 months. The bloom looks like a small, pink pine cone at the beginning and matures to produce a plump 1 to 4kg fruit.

To produce the best pineapples, the plants need constant pampering from expert growers. They also need the right conditions – they like it warm, but don’t like strong sunlight; they need rain but not too much. The ideal temperature is between 22 and 29 degrees – never below 16 or above 32 degrees.

Fyffes grow most of the pineapples on their own farms in Costa Rica and Panama, but they also partner with specially selected growers in Costa Rica, Colombia and Panama to provide a consistent year-round supply. The key to great pineapples is patience... and a commitment to quality.

How are pineapples harvested? Unlike bananas, you cannot rely on size and colour to tell you when a supersweet pineapple is ready. The farmers regularly measure the sugar-acid ratio of the fruit and only when this is just right do they give the ‘OK’ to harvest. Our pineapples are harvested when ripe.

You'll know how prickly pineapples are, so you won't be surprised to hear that harvesting requires great care... and protective clothing! (Pickers wear safety gloves when harvesting the pineapples.) Once at the pack house, the fruit is washed and packed.

How do pineapples get to Europe? Pineapples are carefully packed and shipped by sea under temperature controlled conditions so that they reach their market in the best possible condition. This can take up to 14 days. In store, they may look a bit green on the outside but will be gloriously ripe and succulent inside! They are best eaten within 4 days of purchase. For storage, the refrigerator is the best place.

Our varieties: Fyffes Gold pineapples are of the "Supersweet" variety. Grown in Costa Rica, Panama and Colombia where the climate is ideal for growing pineapples, our Fyffes Gold pineapples are grown to be juicy, packed with goodness and with just the right balance of sweet and sour (acid). But, don't just take our word for it – try one!

Nutritional value of the pineapple:

Nutritional values: pines: 100g = 56 kcal (232 kJ)

Protein: 0,5 g

Fat: 0,2 g

Carbohydrates: 12,4 g

Source: GU nutritional value ranking (issue 2008/09)

Some facts about why pineapples are good for us:

Pineapple feeds the body and mind. Low in calories and rich in vitamins and minerals, it contains enzymes that aid digestion and even helps your body produce serotonin which can make you feel happy, calm and relaxed. It's the ultimate mood food... and it's even good for your skin! They say pineapple juice will help skin look younger and feel fresher. Try making a face pack from the pulp and use it on wrinkles and dry skin!

Pineapple is also good for:

1. Your metabolism:

- Because it's alkaline and rich in minerals it can help the stomach's acid-base balance
- The natural fruit acids can absorb substances in the tissues and help to

liberate metabolic waste (those with stomach or liver conditions may need to be careful over acidic foods)

2. Your mind:

- The vanillin found in the pineapple flesh can have a calming effect
- Add this to the tryptophan also found in pineapples (tryptophan helps us to feel happy) and it's easy to see why pineapples are considered a mood food!

3. Your appearance:

- Pineapple juice on the skin can help with sun and age spots
- The pineapple enzymes in some cosmetic products can help remove dead skin cells, leaving the skin looking younger and fresher
- To help with dry skin and wrinkles, try a face mask made of pineapple pulp rinsed off with cold water after 20 minutes – wonderful!

Fun Facts – did you know that...

- At the entrance to their tents Caribbean Indians used to hand a pineapple to guests as a welcome gift. They also grew pineapples as a crown hedge around their villages to ward off enemies
- In 18th century Europe, pineapples adorned banqueting tables to demonstrate wealth – at that time, pineapples could not be imported and so were grown only in expensive, heated greenhouses
- You can grow your own pineapple at home – find out how on Fact Sheet 6